

Group Work in Schools

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Step 3: Recruit

Step 4: Screen and Select

Provide potential group members (and parents) with information
so they can assent and consent

Gather information to determine if participant is suitable for the
group based on goals, willingness, and interpersonal skills

Step 3: Recruit

- ▶ Referrals from teachers, parents, students, administration
 - ▶ Be sure that you gain specific information from the individual referring about needs and how student will benefit
 - ▶ Make it clear that referral does not ensure selection.
- ▶ Classroom guidance



Step 4: Screen and Select

- ▶ Screening procedures

- ▶ Interviews

- ▶ Treatment team meeting

- ▶ Questionnaire

- ▶ Group Therapy Survey (Slocum, 1987; Carter et al 2001)

- Useful with adolescents to screen for misconceptions about group that need to be addressed

- ▶ Expectations about Counseling (Tinsley, Workman & Kass, 1980)

- Useful with adolescents to screen negative attitudes about counseling

- ▶ The Group Assessment Form (Lynn, 1994)

- Useful with adolescents and children to assess motivation, appropriateness for group, etc.

- ▶ Readiness for Group (DeLucia-Waack, 2006)

- Short measure to evaluate motivation and skills.

- ▶ Check list (e.g. Tap-In Checklist)



Step 4: Screen and Select, Screening Interview 3- to 40 minutes

Goals

- ▶ Provide information (e.g. purpose, goals, procedures, ground rules)
- ▶ Assess issues and if they match group goals
- ▶ Assess interpersonal style and potential to succeed (e.g. talk about presenting problem, follow directions, stay on task, level of comfort, eye contact, etc.)
- ▶ Address concerns and questions about group
- ▶ Begin to build rapport and develop trust

Sequence and Format

- ▶ An interactive process for both parties to assess “fit”
- ▶ Format:
 - ▶ Introduction of group leader, purpose of interview, and group goals
 - ▶ Potential group member’s goals, past coping mechanisms, and level of reflection (e.g. how often do you get angry and how do you typically express anger? Has this worked?)
 - ▶ Information about procedures and ground rules(e.g. time, commitment, etc.)
 - ▶ Commitment to ground rules
 - ▶ Information about how group works and specific interventions
 - ▶ How potential group member can work on his or her goals
 - ▶ Questions related to specific selection and deselection criteria, group member participation, and group in general.
 - ▶ Closing- what will happen next



Step 4: Screen and Select

- ▶ Remember that the goal of a group is to create a group where children and adolescents feel accepted and cared about so that they will try new behaviors and ways of thinking. If students do not feel safe or feel judged, they will not participate.



Step 4: Screen and Select , General Criteria

Do select students who...

- ▶ Range so that there are positive role models
- ▶ Are close in age, no more than 2 years chronologically apart (Smead, 1995)
- ▶ Are approximately the same social, emotional, and physical maturity
- ▶ Respond well to social influence
- ▶ Can work cooperatively
- ▶ From different racial, ethnic, and SES backgrounds
- ▶ Whose psychological needs are balanced

Don't select students who... (Deselection; Yalom, 2005)

- ▶ Siblings or relative who feel they need to adhere to familial rules
- ▶ Have a past history of conflict; it could jeopardize confidentiality (Riva et al 2000)
- ▶ Are suicidal or homicidal
- ▶ Are involved in sexual activity together
- ▶ Are in recent or ongoing crisis (unless it is the topic of the group)
- ▶ Parents are divided about the participation
- ▶ Are too different from the rest of the group that they feel isolated or scapegoated (e.g. new immigrant student)
- ▶ Extremely aggressive, physically or verbally
- ▶ Overwhelmed emotionally (they will dominate group time)
- ▶ Too sensitive to criticism
- ▶ Can not empathize
- ▶ Are extremely hyperactive and can not sit and focus



Step 4: Screen and Select, Specific Criteria to Assess Fit With Group Goals

Homogeneity

- ▶ Homogeneity in regard to problem type and severity (e.g. a student exhibiting binge eating behavior is not a good candidate for a positive body image group focusing on prevention).

“Role Balance”

A coping model is what we are looking for in a group – youths who have the same major key problems but who are different in terms of their experience and personality. – Smead, 2000

Heterogeneity

- ▶ Different
 - ▶ in coping skills
 - ▶ in stages (divorce, recently vs. several years ago)
 - ▶ Attitudes about situation
 - ▶ Disclosure levels
 - ▶ Emotional response levels to the situation (e.g. anger management)
 - ▶ Cultural heritage
 - ▶ SES levels
 - ▶ Resiliency levels
 - ▶ Family situation
 - ▶ Birth order



Step 4: Screen and Select

- ▶ Help teachers, administrators, and parents understand is a student is not selected.....
Use the optimal surgery analogy



Step 4: Screen and Select, Informed Consent

▶ Informed consent

▶ Cormier & Comier's (1991) Informed Consent Checklist

- ▶ Description of strategy
- ▶ Rationale or purpose of group
- ▶ Description of the counselor's role
- ▶ Description of the client's role
- ▶ Risks
- ▶ Benefits
- ▶ Offer to answer questions
- ▶ Voluntary participation clause
- ▶ Clear, nontechnical language



Step 4: Screen and Select, Informed Consent

- ▶ Informed consent examples in the Wiki.



Step 5: Pretest and Pre session

Step 4: Screen and Select, Pre group session

Goals

- ▶ An instrument for both the group leader and members to decide if they are ready for group

Pregroup preparation sets treatment expectations, defines group rules, and instructs members in appropriate roles and skills needed for effective group participation and group cohesion” – Burlingame et al 2001, p. 375

Pregroup preparation has been correlated with the development of cohesion, satisfaction, decreased drop out, and positive group behavior (Bednar & Kaul, 1994)

Sequence and Format

- ▶ Format (Bowman & Delucia, 1993; Cummins, 1996)
 - ▶ Cognitive
 - ▶ A handout about the group, members, skills, topics, etc.
 - ▶ Vicarious
 - ▶ A video example of a group (e.g. Smead (1996) anger management group, The Breakfast movie clip)
 - ▶ Experiential
 - ▶ Series of role play to practice

Step 4: Screen and Select, Informed Consent

- ▶ Pre-session example in the Wiki.





Step 6: Prepare Materials and Ensure Procedures are Understood

Step 5: Materials and Procedures

Materials

- ▶ Depending on the developmental age, “talk” is not the natural medium for communication. Have materials for communication:

- ▶ Drawing/ painting materials
- ▶ Puppets
- ▶ Music
- ▶ Film
- ▶ Dress up
- ▶ Books



Procedures

- ▶ Confidentiality
- ▶ Disturbance
 - ▶ “It is not acceptable to interrupt the sessions unless a true emergency is present. As interruptions can effect trust building and work.”



Step 7: Conduct the Sessions

Establishing Ground Rules & Norms

Leadership Skills

Note taking

Step 5: Conduct the Sessions, Ground Rules & Norms

- ▶ Tape chart paper on the wall, or spread it on the floor.
- ▶ Define rules as behaviors expected in the group. Discuss why rules are important.
- ▶ Let everyone select one group rule and help them frame it positively.
 - ▶ Treat others with respect
 - ▶ Give everyone a chance to talk
- ▶ Have the entire group sign the paper to symbolize their agreement to follow the rules.
- ▶ Visible display the ground rules for every group as add to them as needed.



Step 5: Conduct the Sessions, Leadership Skills

Facilitating	Open up clear and direct communication among group members to enhance group and the reaching of goals. Central for Person- centered therapy.
Evaluating	Assessment of the group process, movement, and direction of the group as a whole and each individual member. This is taught to group members. For example, having them assess what they learned, the group dynamics, etc. Can be part of processing or closure.
Protecting “Prenatal role”	Safeguarding members from psychological risks (e.g., confidentiality emotional “overspill”) .
Supporting	Encourage and reinforce growth and disclosure. Being fully present, balancing support, and actively listening.
Initiating	Promote participation and keep the group from floundering. Employ techniques that encourage deeper self reflection and provide links among group members. Note: Too much direction leads to passivity.
Goal-setting	Aid group and individual members in setting (and as needed modifying) goals for group and the session. Guides group activities toward goals attainment.
Linking	Identify themes and connect encourages member-to-member vs. member-to-facilitator communication and connect based on the commonalities.



Step 5: Conduct the Sessions, Leadership Skills

Feedback	Provides specific, honest reactions (thoughts and/or feelings) based on observation. Group leader may include gentle “confronting” (e.g., discrepancies between verbal and non-verbal messages). It is presented in a way that a person can receive and consider it.
Suggesting	Give information, provide a new perspective; or assign homework to assist group members in developing alternative ways of acting and thinking.
Interpreting	Provides possible explanations for thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.
Self-disclosure	\Reveals one’s own reactions to here-and-now group events. “I get that”
Modeling	Demonstrates desired behaviors through actions and reactions.
Blocking	Use redirection, here-and-now reflections, etc to stop unproductive behaviors (e.g. story-telling, excessive questioning, undue pressure to disclose, gossiping.)
Summarizing	Pulls together important elements of a session or particular set of interactions. Good to use at the end of the session.
Terminating	Group leader helps members to bring closure to the experience (e.g., “suggesting” how members might transfer what they have learned in group to life outside of group). This may include providing resources/referrals, arranging a follow-up group session, inviting individual consultation following group termination. This refers to closing the session and ending the group

Step 5: Conduct the Sessions, Note Taking

- ▶ See Examples in the Wiki



Step 5: Conduct the Sessions, Note Taking

Subjective Complaint:

- Presenting problem(s) or issue(s) from the client's point of view. What the client says about causes, duration, and seriousness of issue(s). If the client has more than one concern, rank them based on client's perception of their importance.

Objective Finding:

- Counselor's observation of the client's behavior during the session. Verbal and nonverbal, including eye contact, voice tone and volume, body posture. Especially note any changes and when they occur (such as a client who becomes restless in discussing a topic or whose face turns red under certain circumstances). Note discrepancies in behavior.

Assessment of Progress:

- Counselor's view of the client, beyond what the client said or did. Continual evaluation of client in terms of emotions, cognitions, and behavior. Identification of themes and patterns in what client says and does. Use of developmental (Erikson, social learning theory) or mental health models (DSM-IV). Include your hypotheses, interpretations, and conceptualization of client.

Plans for Next Session:

- Plans for client, not for the counselor. Short and long-term goals. How you want to interact with client; what you may plan to respond to in next session with client (follow-up on family issues discussed). Do you plan to help client focus on thoughts, feelings, or behaviors? What particular strategy or theoretical approach might you use? What do you base your plan on?

Step 5: Conduct the Sessions, Note Taking

Client Description:

- Manner of dress, physical appearance, illnesses, disabilities, energy level, general self-presentation.

Plans for Counselor:

- What reading or research do you need to do in preparation? Practice? What help do you need from your supervisor?



Step 8: Post test/ Evaluate



Step 9: Conduct a Follow Up Session

Step 8: Follow Up Sessions

- ▶ Approximately 4 to 6 weeks after the end of a group, it is appropriate to reconvene the group members for a brief sessions to share what they have accomplished and perceptions about the group.



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